

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
North Coast Railroad Authority
South End Alternative Project
FEMA-1203-DR-CA

The North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA) has requested Public Assistance Program funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) for the South End Alternative. FEMA has been incorporated into the Department of Homeland Security's Emergency Preparedness and Response Directorate.

The South End Alternative (Proposed Action Alternative) consists of repairing, cleaning, replacing, and upgrading existing railroad infrastructure on the portion of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad (NWP) between Lombard in Napa County and Willits in Mendocino County. The railroad had sustained extensive damages during the 1997-1998 winter storms, a presidentially declared major disaster.

Since the exact scope, location, and time frame for individual actions to be undertaken for the Proposed Action Alternative are currently undefined, FEMA has prepared a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA), in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations implementing NEPA (Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations [40 CFR] Parts 1500–1508); and FEMA's implementing regulations (Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 10).

The PEA describes basic components of the South End Alternative, evaluates general environmental effects of the South End Alternative, and provides the framework for additional evaluation under NEPA for specific actions, as appropriate. As and when NCRA develops plans for a specific action, FEMA would have an opportunity to review that action within the context of the PEA to determine if more site-specific analysis and documentation would be required to comply with NEPA and its implementing regulations. If the level of analysis provided by the PEA is insufficient for the specific action, then additional analysis would be tiered from the PEA, pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1508.28.

Based upon the conditions and the information contained in the PEA on the South End Alternative Project (March 2004), and in accordance with NEPA and its implementing regulations, and Executive Orders 11988 (Floodplain Management), 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), and 12898 (Environmental Justice), the following is concluded:

A Finding of No Significant Impact. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared, based on the fact that there will be no long-term adverse impacts to the natural environment resulting from this project.

This Finding of No Significant Impact is based upon the conditions contained in the Final Programmatic Environmental Assessment.

For more information, or if you have any questions or comments, please contact Alessandro Amaglio, Region IX Environmental Officer, at (510) 627-7027. No action will be allowed to occur until 15 days after publication of this Finding of No Significant Impact.